

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action dated March 23, 2006, finally rejecting claims 1-11, 13-30, 32-48, and 50-57. The claim amendments included herein are merely clarifying amendments and are not meant to change the intended scope of the claims. Thus, the amendments present the rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal, and they should be entered in due course. Moreover, the amendments are manifest, requiring only a cursory review by the Examiner, thereby providing additional ground for their entry.

Claims 1-11, 13-30, 32-48 and 50-57 were pending in the application. In the Office Action, claims 1-11, 13-30, 32-48, and 50-57 were rejected. In this Amendment, claims 1, 14, 16, 19, 32, 34, 37, 50, and 52 have been amended. Claims 1-11, 13-30, 32-48 and 50-57 thus remain for consideration.

Applicants submit that claims 1-11, 13-30, 32-48 and 50-57 are in condition for allowance and request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in light of the following remarks.

§102 and §103 Rejections

Claims 1, 4, 9, 15, 16, 19, 22, 27, 33, 34, 37, 40, 45, 51, 52, and 55-57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Nishigaki et al. (US 5,825,968).

Claims 10, 11, 28, 29, 46, and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishigaki.

Claims 7, 12, 25, 30, 43, and 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishigaki, and further in view of Kori et al. (US 5,778,064).

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 20, 21, 23, 24, 38, 39, 41, and 42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishigaki, and further in view of Iwaki (US 6,567,097).

Claims 8, 18, 26, 36, 44, and 54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishigaki, and further in view of Nguyen et al. (US 6,272,383).

Claims 14, 17, 32, 35, 50, and 53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishigaki, and further in view of Ryan et al. (US 6,374,036).

Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims (claims 1, 19 and 37) are patentable over Nishigaki, Kori, Iwaki, Nguyen and Ryan.

Applicants' invention as recited in the independent claims is directed toward a signal conversion apparatus and a signal conversion method. Each of the claims recites converting an input signal to a converted signal, examining the input signal for additional information added to the signal, and prohibiting the converted signal from being copied when the additional information indicates that copying of the input signal is limited. That is, copying of the input signal is prohibited when the additional information indicates that the input signal may be copied a predetermined number of times. For illustrative disclosure, the Examiner is referred to specification page 78, lines 10-23.

Neither Nishigaki, Kori, Iwaki, Nguyen nor Ryan discloses prohibiting copying of the input signal when additional information added to the signal indicates that the signal may be copied a predetermined number of times.

Regarding Nishigaki, Applicants note that the reference appears to disclose prohibiting copying of an input signal when additional information added to the signal indicates that the signal may never be copied (Nishigaki col. 2, lines 1-35). However, Nishigaki does not disclose prohibiting copying of an input signal when additional information added to the signal indicates that the signal may be copied a predetermined number of times.

Since neither Nishigaki, Kori, Iwaki, Nguyen nor Ryan discloses prohibiting copying of the input signal when additional information added to the signal indicates that the signal may be copied a predetermined number of times, Applicants believe that claims 1, 19 and 37 are patentable over Nishigaki, Kori, Iwaki, Nguyen and Ryan - taken either alone or in combination - on at least this basis.

Dependent claims 2-11, 13-18, 20-30, 32-36, 38-48 and 50-57 depend respectively on independent claims 1, 19 and 37. Since dependent claims inherit the limitations of their respective base claims, Applicants believe that claims 2-11, 13-18, 20-30, 32-36, 38-48 are patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons discussed in connection with claims 1, 19 and 37.

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, he/she is invited to telephone the undersigned at (908) 654-5000.

Application No.: 09/419,164

Docket No.: SONYJP 3.0-089

The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 12-1095.

The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

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Respectfully submitted,

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